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MINUTES OF THE MEETING OF THE  
MARICOPA ASSOCIATION OF GOVERNMENTS  
MANAGEMENT SUBCOMMITTEE ON 2005 POPULATION OPTIONS

Friday, December 6, 2002

Members

George Pettit, Gilbert, Chairman  
Charlie McClendon, Avondale  
Prisila Ferreira, Peoria

Norris Nordvold, Phoenix  
Jim Huling, Mesa  
Patrick Flynn, Tempe

Others in Attendance

Amber Wakeman, Tempe  
Byron Smith, League of Arizona  
Cities and Towns  
Mike Stump, Census Bureau, Washington  
Janet Cummings, Census Bureau, Washington

Wayne Hatcher, Census Bureau, Denver  
Mark Hellfritz, Census Bureau, Denver  
Tom Remes, MAG  
Harry Wolfe, MAG  
Heidi Pahl, MAG

1. Call to Order

The meeting was called to order at 10:05 a.m. by Chairman George Pettit.

2. Meeting Minutes of October 31, 2002

It was moved by Jim Huling, seconded by Prisila Ferreira and unanimously recommended to approve the meeting minutes of October 31, 2002

3. Time-line for Meeting Census Bureau Requirements for Conducting a Special Census and Associated Issues

Harry Wolfe distributed a time line for jurisdictions wishing to undertake a Special Census. He turned the discussion over to Mike Stump, Bureau Chief for the Office of the Special Census.

Mr. Stump commented that jurisdictions or collections of jurisdictions over 200,000 who wish to undertake a Special Census in the fall of 2005 would need to request that the Bureau prepare a cost estimate by February 2003; and enter into a Memorandum of Understanding with the Census Bureau by May of 2003. A partial payment would also need to accompany the agreement.

Mr. Stump said that he wanted to know as soon as possible which smaller jurisdictions wish to pursue a Special Census to assist the Bureau in their planning and preparations for conducting them. He said that jurisdictions with less than 200,000 people would need to submit a cost estimate by July 2004 and to enter into a Memorandum of Understanding (with a partial payment) by September 2004.

Mr. Stump indicated that if there were numerous small jurisdictions that want to conduct a special census, the Bureau would need to stagger conducting them because of the personnel requirements for carrying them out.

Prisila Ferreira asked if the Bureau would conduct the Special Census on a first come first serve basis. Mike Stump responded that it would be up to Denver to decide how that would be carried out. Wayne Hatcher said that they would be carried out on a rolling basis and that the Census Bureau would work with MAG to help come up with a schedule.

Harry Wolfe indicated that the May 2003 deadline jurisdictions above 200,000 for entering into an MOU with the Census Bureau and providing partial payment could be difficult to meet for jurisdictions who had not budgeted funds for a Special Census. He added that July 2003 would be the earliest they could draw on next years funds.

George Pettit, and Charlie McClendon indicated that Gilbert and Avondale respectively had already set aside some money to cover a share of the Special Census. Jim Huling said that Mesa has not set aside any money and does not intend to set any aside. He said that because of financial considerations, Mesa wants to perform a survey and make it work.

Mike Stump noted that the Bureau would not require all the money to cover the cost of a Special Census up front. He said that the Bureau could work out a plan to distribute the costs over time.

Harry Wolfe noted that if the state law is not modified then cities will not have the option of using an estimate and/or survey in lieu of a special census for distributing state-shared revenue.

Byron Smith said that this session of the legislature would be the best time to amend state law, but that it could also be done next legislative session. He also commented that DES didn't like the idea of using an estimate for distributing state-shared revenue, based on their 1995 experience, because they believed it was too political.

Charlie McClendon said if a large jurisdiction was expecting to be able to use a survey in lieu of a Special Census, and the legislature did not change the law, there would be no time for them to then undertake a Special Census.

Jim Huling stated that he did not believe that it would be difficult to get the legislature to pass some kind of amendment to allow for an alternative(s) to a Special Census for distributing state-shared revenues. He noted that jurisdictions around the state are experiencing financial difficulties and that they will want to have an alternative. Mr. Huling said that he would work on drafting a bill as a starting point.

Byron Smith said he agreed with Jim Huling that the high cost of a Special Census would cause jurisdictions around the state to want an alternative.

Norris Nordvold said that his manager was skeptical of the use of population estimates for distributing state-shared revenue. He pointed out that in Census 2000 Phoenix's household size increased based on a full count. He said that the increase in persons per household would be picked up by a full count and not a survey.

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Norris Nordvold also commented that if Phoenix were to do a survey, the City would need to have a larger sample size than identified by the Census Bureau. He added that Phoenix's sample size of 2500 housing units was almost the same as the City of Surprise, despite the fact that Phoenix had many more times its population.

Harry Wolfe explained that the sample size is based on the statistical confidence interval. He said the Bureau derived a sample size assuming a 95% confidence level plus or minus 2%. He said that a higher confidence level would result in a larger sample size.

Jim Huling said that a higher confidence level should be explored.

Prisila Ferreira said that it would be good to pursue a legislative change to allow for alternatives to a Census for distributing state-shared revenue.

Harry Wolfe asked if MAG should submit an official request for a cost estimate for all of Maricopa County. Mike Stump said that because such a large endeavor would require a major restructuring of their Special Census techniques, he probably wouldn't be able to provide a more specific estimate than the \$30 million already generated.

Mike Stump, however, indicated that it would be far easier to develop a cost estimate for smaller jurisdictions, because they already have the methods in place to count the population.

Charlie McClendon asked if a jurisdiction under 200,000 could submit a request for a cost estimate prior to July of 2004. Mike Stump said that such jurisdictions could do that, but if the Census were not undertaken within 90 days of the estimate, the cost could change. However, he encouraged jurisdictions to notify the Census Bureau of their intent to conduct a Special Census so that the Bureau staff could gauge the magnitude of the work effort.

Charlie McClendon asked if a survey seemed a viable alternative for a Special Census would all jurisdictions go for it. It was noted that it is likely that some jurisdictions will probably decide to pursue a Special Census while others will be more likely to chose a survey if the option is available.

George Pettit said that while it would be nice if MAG took a unified position, it is likely that jurisdictions will chose different options for obtaining a 2005 population count for distributing state-shared revenue.

Wayne Hatcher mentioned that have jurisdictions within Maricopa County undertaking surveys and Special Censuses on a rolling basis over the course of the year could create tremendous confusion. One jurisdiction might be undertaking a full count, while another would be using sampling through a survey. It would also make advertising the Census more difficult. He said that if the Bureau is doing a Special Census/Survey for an entire year, it would lose its urgency to recruit personnel and make it difficult to publicize how the count would be carried out.

Norris Nordvold asked if Mike Stump experienced problems with other jurisdictions that wanted to undertake a Special Census; and whether they could afford, given financial problems, a door to door count. Mr. Stump responded that most jurisdictions that want to pursue a Special Census are much smaller than Maricopa County and that the cost issue is not as great there.

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He said that to date the Bureau has received 33 cost estimates for a Special Census and 29 of those estimates were for cities in the State of Illinois. He also mentioned that a number of cities in Illinois do a partial Special Census and only count the fastest growing areas. It was questioned whether such a procedure could be used for deriving a population figure for state-revenue sharing purposes.

Harry Wolfe asked whether he should alert other MAG member agencies as to the deadlines for doing a Special Census. George Pettit said that he should send out an e-mail and that an agenda item should be included on the January Management Committee and Regional Council meetings.

Patrick Flynn said that Tempe is addressing its Census population count by challenging the 2000 Census figure. He said that the city staff has prepared documentation to demonstrate that the Bureau missed about 5,000 people in Tempe.

4. Issues Associated with Conducting A Census Survey

Harry Wolfe noted that at the October 31, 2002 meeting, it was requested that MAG staff research the Tucson experience with the 1995 Census Survey. He said that David Taylor, who worked on the 1995 Census Survey with the City of Tucson was unavailable to provide input. However, he said that Mr. Taylor commented that population in Group Quarters should not be surveyed, but rather subjected to a full count.

Mr. Wolfe said that he had asked the Current Population Survey staff at the Census Bureau to prepare an estimate for the cost of a survey with the added assumption that we would need a full count of population in group quarters. He stated that the cost estimate would probably be developed in the next few weeks.

5. Legislation for Alternatives to a 2005 Special Census

Harry Wolfe reported that in order for an estimate and/or survey to be used for distributing state-shared revenues, a change in state legislation would need to be undertaken. He added that such a change could be pursued this legislative session or next session.

6. Meeting Schedule

Harry Wolfe indicated that the timing of the Subcommittee meetings conflicted with MAG's monthly staff meeting. The Committee recommended that the subcommittee meet at 10:30 a.m. on the first Friday of each month to avoid the conflict.

Harry Wolfe noted that the cost estimate for a survey would be provided shortly and offered to hold a meeting in the next few weeks to discuss the results. He said that the meeting could be conducted using the videoconferencing/audioconferencing system.

George Pettit noted that with the holidays coming up, that we might as well just wait until the next scheduled meeting on January 3, 2003 to find out more details about the cost of a survey.

The meeting adjourned at 10:55 a.m.